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## MARY McGRORY: CIA Will Feel, Oh, So Comfortable With Turner

Admiral Stansfield Turner, President Carter's second choice for CIA director, was wearing mufti for his confirmation hearings. The Senate "Oversight" Committee saluted him anyway.

Whatever doubts they may have harbored about putting a military man in charge of an agency that has in the past demonstrated a dangerous tendency to run its own little wars, were overcome by the comforting thought that an admiral would make a tight ship of the stained and tattered agency.

Turner is an impressive figure. His rugged profile, his silver sideburns, make him worthy of a Navy poster. His manner is both suave and commanding. If he seemed less than the magnificent sailor-scholar of Annapolis classmate Jimmy Carter's heraldry, he was also not a prickly intellectual like Theodore C. Sorensen, he of the exotic ideas about

military service or outlandish notions about the public's right to know.

The members made some cursory attempts to find the civilian in the admiral. They sought assurances that he would protect the public from the CIA's notorious indifference to civil liberties. He was on the whole non-committal. He promised only to "study" those questions if confirmed.

Nobody pressed. It is understood that he is not yet on board, and the absence of strong opinions seemed a point in his favor.

To a question from Sen. William Hathaway, D-Maine, about discontinuing para-military operations, he gave an answer worthy of Richard Helms or William Colby: "I don't think we should deprive the country of that possibility."

Several of the overseers seemed anxious to hear him say that he would resign on principle if given an

immoral or illegal order and would confide in the committee if such an order were given by the Commander-in-Chief.

The admiral tried to give satisfaction on what was to him a terribly far-fetched proposition, but it was minimal. He would tell the committee about his irreconcilable differences with the President after he had resigned, not before. If government officials were to go running to press or Congress every time they disagreed with the Commander-in-Chief, he noted disapprovingly, "we would have anarchy."

"Would you say no to the President?" Sen. Birch Bayh, D-Ind., asked him.

The admiral cruised away. "I am not a policy-maker, I am a provider of intelligence."

Sen. Charles Mathias, R-Md., wanted to know if the committee

would be advised of covert operations in advance.

The admiral told him soothingly that he might delete details of intelligence operations that the committee "will not want to hear."

"May not want to hear?" Mathias echoed, unbelievably. "That's a sore phrase around here. We had a senior senator who said, 'I don't want to hear it.' There are a lot of things in life we don't want to hear or know about. I don't think that it should be a criterion for withholding information."

The admiral, realizing his blunder, hastily apologized, then glided into the familiar litany about "the responsibility for the individuals engaged in covert actions whose lives may depend on their being kept secret."

He would "anticipate no difficulty" in complying with the sense of the resolution, which, inconveniently, requires CIA directors to inform the

Congress when it is about to overthrow a government.

On the basic question of covert operations themselves, there were no questions at all. Apparently, that argument is over. One year after the most scandalous revelations about poisons, assassination plots, drug experiments, mail-openings and Mafia-recruiting, the senators felt no need to examine the director-designate's sentiments on such "old, unhappy far-off things."

Members hinted that these thorny subjects had been discussed in cozy office visits with the admiral. On a mortifying recent development — the revelation that the CIA kept King Hussein on a million-dollar dole for 20 years — not a word was spoken. The committee does not seek to advertise its ineffectuality, and presumably that little awkwardness was also canvassed in chambers out of the vulgar gaze.

It was smooth sailing all the way for Jimmy Carter's Annapolis classmate — except, notably, when it came to the subject of his retirement from the Navy. Sen. Joseph Biden, D-Del., raised it diffidently. He told the admiral the press might wonder.

The admiral seemed offended, and spoke for the first and only time with real conviction. He had been 30 years in the Navy. Retirement would not alter his attitudes and background. Besides, they have always had a military official in high office at the CIA.

Yes, that is right. They always have

That's why some people thought it needed civilianization. But Jimmy Carter reasoned rightly that the CIA would be more comfortable with a little gold braid. And that the Senate "Oversight" Committee would be, too. The new watchdogs, like the old, don't want to be beasts to the CIA.